

ANIMAL

The Football Special.

Issue 2

80p (£5 to Professors, coppers and liberals)

Are You A Fat Cat?

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Off With the All New
ANARCHO-POP

Fresh from the Molotov Brewery.

Fans fighting the changes at the clubs - Man. City, Birmingham, Newcastle United, Bournemouth, Brighton, Charlton, Hull, Spurs, and Sheffield United. Nationalism and football. Larry O'Hara on the role of nazis at a football riot. Goings on behind the scenes at Manchester United and the tribute to Eric Cantona (thats the way to deal with racists).

All this and more on the Anti bloodsports debate and the summer demonstration, with the Labour Party betrayal. Dianas dead and England are in France '98.

Who are we? Why are we?

This section hasn't changed much since the first issue. The priority for the movement is clear, we have to get our act together, and quickly. The time for being nice and liberal has long since passed. So, in this issue we hope we have been USEFUL, RELEVANT, READABLE and POPULAR.

The articles have been dedicated to clarifying theoretical questions in order to promote and encourage more effective and creative activity. We encourage readers to spread the ANIMAL word and get writing and active. If your articles aren't gonna get in ANIMAL, we will pass them to "provisional Class War" as there is a new paper now. You can get your copy from P.O. Box 467, London, E8 3QX, for 70p and an SAE.

DISTRIBUTION

We would like offers to distribute this magazine all around the world. Animal so far has been spotted in USA, Australia & Scandinavia! In Britain though, we will let you have 5 copies on a 'you sell them, or return any you've got left' basis. Don't worry if you are a slow payer, although you will not get any more until you're covered your commitment. As the cover price of ANIMAL is £1 you get them at 60p a copy so you can make a pint or two from the proceeds. If you're confident you can sell 10 or more, half the money up front would be good to cover our postage costs.

Send your stamps, payee blank cheques, postal orders, or concealed cash to:

ANIMAL, P.O. Box 467, London, E8 3QX.

All office material, envelopes, photocopy paper, tippex, tape, markers, goes down a treat as well. [A stolen photocopier would be a good as well!]

SUBSCRIPTIONS

We are now able to offer subscriptions at the bargain rate of £5 for 3 issues. This includes other mailouts and news, as and when necessary. Crucial stuff. Cash to our normal address.

NEXT ISSUE

We want our next issue to look at the law and crime from a working class point of view.

We are also interested in articles about organisational strategies. What forms of organisation work and encourage working class activity and which don't.

If you want to build on the Anti Bloodsport article in this issue it would be particularly welcome, as struggles which might not necessarily appear to be working class sometimes have a lot of class consciousness. Don't forget, it is in struggle that ideas can change in a revolutionary direction and we should be in the business of encouraging anti capitalist and anti police activity. It is struggle which opens peoples' minds as to the true nature of the beast.

Dianas Dead

In the aftermath of the death of Diana the monarchy has again come out of it badly. The stiff upper lip, and distant royals cannot help but look like they don't care.

People are saying that if the queen had not come out of the luxurious castle at Balmoral to come to London on the Friday before Dianas' funeral the monarchy would have toppled.

A lot of what people are saying in public can be open to misinterpretation, just cos a few people are agreeing with others in front of their boss about 'what a shame' it all is, doesn't mean that in private they are not jumping around and celebrating the death of another rich royal bastard.

The middle class whinge on about how much she really cared. What a load of bollocks. All she did was get free lunches at do's, dresses and other stuff, she did *none of the hard graft* that nurses do every day in hospitals. The middle class are also saying its like you've lost somebody you knew. Again, bollocks! You didn't know her at all!

That she was badly treated by the royal establishment is no surprise. But a fool gets whats coming to them. She should have known the aristocracy are a bunch of manipulative rich bastards who will do anything they like to whoever they please, to keep their hands on the 30 pieces of silver.

In the mean time the people have invented a lot of jokes. The following are a few that are travelling round the pubs and the canteens of this country.

1. What was Dianas last drink? Harvey Wallbanger!
2. Whats the difference between Tiger Woods and Princess Diana? Tiger had a good driver!
3. Paperazzi are chasing Diana shouting "Di Di Di, No! - we didn't mean like that!"
4. Dodi is talking to the chauffeur, "will you take me home, and Di".

A lot of people are using the Diana stick to beat the rest of the other Royals with. Lets help them turn it into a real stick....

The priority now is to build on the contempt and envy of the Royal wealth there is. We have to force Prince Charles off the crown, and we must make sure nobody else takes it up either.

Our day will come.

England to France in 98

So there was yet more trouble at a game involving Englands away supporters. It was a crap game but a good result, spot the contradictions if you can! The Italian police went barmy smashing a lot of English supporters at random.

David Mellor is leading the moral crusade for the rich and middle class to take over football and price out footballs regular constituency. They want us at home or the pub so we don't bring 'shame' to England. Meanwhile we will carry on going to football and having a pint!

Anti Bloodsports Demonstration. Hyde Park to Trafalgar Square.

August 2nd. 1997.

The following was put together by gathering leaflets from different groups at the demonstration and by talking to different activists. Notably people from the Movement Against the Monarchy, Class War and hunt saboteurs.

Class Struggle towards the Millennium.

The political importance of this demonstration cannot be underestimated. After a summer of the *Labour government backsliding* on its commitments. (What a shock that was??!) Firstly, the Labour party and its malingeringers like Tony Banks M.P. and some of the Animal Rights Hierarchy had been saying "lets wait till the Labour party can get in and then they'll ban hunting." What a load of bollocks.

Then we have the Countryside Alliance who on **July 10th 1997** organised a rally.

It was a grotesque gathering of in-bred squires, farmers, debutants, lords and ladies, their servants, and other village idiots who gathered in Hyde Park to 'support the countryside' and demand the continuation of fox hunting. This was one demo that the editors at "Animal" weren't looking forward to. And we were right.

The landed gentry and other members of the ruling class mobilised about 50,000 of its workers by giving them free grub and transport to London, and a day off work. Labour peer Baroness Mallalieu said "Hunting is our music, our poetry, it is our art, it is our pleasure". Straight away the Labour government capitulated to them by saying "We'll not give it enough parliamentary time". No left wing demonstration has ever changed any governments mind as quick!!

The 'we can't break the law brigade' and the 'what about parliament lot' live in a dream world where the mother of parliaments is 'OK really'. Its plain that direct action is

the only way to get things changed and that this battle is a political one.

Fox hunting has always and always will be a class issue. At its peak are the Royals who hunt and blast their way all over rural Britain. The aristocratic hunters, with all their pompous pageantry are very similar to the Orange Order marches through Catholic estates in the North of Ireland. Their aim is to remind everybody who is boss in a modern day cavalry charge across the countryside.

Its clear that the spineless official organisations of the Animal Rights Movement such as the League Against Cruel Sports who didn't even support the Anti Bloodsports demonstration on August the 2nd are part of the problem. It is our own self organisation, and linking up with other groups who do direct action and guide political struggles such as the **Movement Against the Monarchy** that show the way.

It is by creating a movement that can really link struggles in an effective way, whilst not relying on the soft and liberal organisations such as the RSPCA to front the campaign, that victory is to be won. The anti hunt movement has never been capable of getting the 'Townies' or city dwellers to support the anti hunting campaigns directly that has been part of the problem.

Now with the **Movement Against the Monarchy** challenging the status quo by preparing to march on Prince Charles Highgrove House. On October 25th 1997 the

animal rights movement really has a chance to link with the populations that will win the political battle. The monarchy and all it represents, the obscene wealth, the landowning and bloodsports, are the issues on which this battle can be won by motivating people who have interests directly opposed to the Royals. This is the first attempt to get a working alliance so we should be prepared for a long fight.

They came to us on July 10th, we marched in our own area, to Trafalgar Square on August the 2nd. Now lets go to them on October 25th.

The August 2nd demonstration was good for a number of reasons. Firstly, a mob formed after a man was spotted with a camera hiding behind a couple of coppers. A bloke with a traffic cone was chanting "Evil, Evil" as he pointed at the treacherous lackey. The lackey was either a paid cameraman from the Horse and Hound, the Aristocracy or from MI5\Special Branch. Either way, what happened next will make everybody with their heart in the right place have a giggle. The cameraman was petrified as people swarmed closer and gave him a bloody nose. The police had to send transit vans in to rescue their men. Ha Ha Ha.

There was a bit of a long hot march to Trafalgar Square and some sit down outside McDonalds but not much else happened. The feeling outside McDonalds was quite good and the Police were encouraging the march past the protest as fast as they can. Its clear in this situation that it is in everybodies interests to slow down and reverse the march, and make any protest as big as we can quickly. As usual the police were the lying scum that they are. One sergeant was spotted saying "keep on going, its only Burger king workers". Thus defusing an animal rights protest. The filth was quickly put right by a bloke who shouted "Liar, Liar, your pants are on fire" at him. Its obvious to anybody that the police are the enemy of any progressive movement.

Another piece of good news was that another protected cameraman, probably MI5\Special brach for sure this time, was taking photos of everybody on the march. The filth were protecting his face when one of our cameramen was trying to get his mugshot. After quite a bit of persistence our cameraman, by now a working class hero, had managed to get the bastards mugshot. And we let him know it. He didn't enjoy that one bit. The film is being developed in our own facilities and will be passed to groups such as Class War to be spread around.

Remember, people never fight battles if they do not directly concern them. We cannot subsume different struggles in a central organisation easily, if its possible to be done. As David Lamb outlined, the Leninist party imposed its own agenda on people so that they were

represented 'effectively'. This is a total negation of revolutionary activity which does not seek to control or represent, but to enable more effective struggles to continue and develop. Where the future does lie is in encouraging different groups to work together on their own struggles and other peoples where there is overlap.

CHARLES MUST NEVER BE KING!

He is not fit to rule. Join the march on Prince Charles Highgrove House on Saturday 25th October 1997. Assemble at the Town Hall in Tetbury, Gloucestershire at 12 noon.

Movement Against the Monarchy (MA'M),
P.O. Box 14672, London, E9 5UQ.

L I S T I N G S

Animal Liberation Front Supporters Group, BCM 1160, London, WC1N 3XX.

DS4A (Distributors), Box 8, 82 Colston street, Bristol.

Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dunblane or Dundee Class War, P.O. Box 1021, Edinburgh, EH8 9PW.

Ipswich East Anglia Class War, P.O. Box 87, Ipswich, IP4 4JQ.

London or Kent Class War, P.O. Box 467, London, E8 3QX.

Manchester Class War, Department 81, 1 Newton Street, Manchester, M1 1HW.

Newcastle Anarchist Group, c/o P.O. Box 1TA, Newcastle, NE99 1TA.

Nottingham Class War, P.O. Box 192, Nottingham, NG1 1FT.

Reading ABC [prisoner support], Folder 19, Rising Sun Institute, 30 Silver street, Reading, RG1.

Sheffield Anarchist Group, P.O. Box 446, Sheffield, S1 1NY.

Solidarity Federation P.O. Box 1095, Sheffield, S2 4YR.

Welsh Socialists, P.O. Box 661, Wrecsam, Cymru, LL11 1QU.

We're not saying everything and everyone in these groups are great, but they are undoubtedly the best going. So why not get in touch?

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Old Trafford - From the Outside, Looking In

The following article was originally delivered at a meeting on football during the 1994 "Anarchy in the UK-10 Days That Shook the World" festival. As such some of the arguments may have dated slightly, some of the issues raised may have abated slightly. The nature of British football however has not changed in the slightest - it remains governed by an uneasy alliance of old school tie types and Thatcherite businessmen, with the working class on the outside looking in, occasionally asking for its ball back.

Back in 1993 we published an article in Class War (C.W. issue 59, page 16) about a strike by canteen staff at the Manchester United executive suite. I've never been in the executive suite but as far as I'm aware its a sort of upper class chippy, largely populated by businessmen in loud ties and pub landlords.

What interested me about the strike was how unusual it actually was. It wasn't unusual because the number of strikes decline each year in this country, or because there are so few strikes in the catering industry - what staggered me was that the canteen ladies actions seemed so out of keeping with the normal behaviour of United's employees, and it was off the Richter scale when compared to the deferential, almost sycophantic attitude of some of the clubs stewards.

It takes a special sort of person to be a steward. At United they don't take pride in the job, just an incredible amount of pride in actually having a job as a steward. At most clubs (particularly before standing was abolished) their jobs largely consist of wearing fluorescent jackets and saying "you can't stand there son" but their chests actually heaved with pride as they say it.

At the time of the canteen ladies dispute, the canteen staff were being paid £13.75 for a 6 hour shift (by the richest club in Britain) but I'm not actually sure if stewards get paid or not. Its certainly the case at United with some of them, that if they didn't get paid they would happily do it for free.

What the worst stewards remind me of are the "company men", that dying breed of employees who've been with a firm 30/40 years "man and boy", and who would walk over hot coals for the firm. Just as the owners of a factory or the managers of an office come to think that all the employees think the same as the "company men". I think up until the last few years club chairman and directors actually believed that all the fans had the same attitude and opinions towards the club as the club gateman, the tea ladies and the club stewards.

Most stewards, certainly at United, are long term supporters, and most directors come into contact not with the supporters on the terraces but with the employees of the club. And these employees are that grateful for

actually having a job at the club they have supported all their lives that they would never dream of publicly criticizing the club they work for. They would certainly never dream of making a criticism of the club in front of a senior employee of the club.

I can remember, years ago, queuing up to get tickets for a United game, and I was just about to go into the ticket office when who should appear out of a side door but Uniteds' Chairman, Martin Edwards. At times the hatred United fans had for Edwards has been hard to describe, but everyone seemed to be struck dumb by the site of who was in front of us. We simply stood and gauped, nobody could believe it.

There had been a steward minding our queue and although he had been chatting to a couple of the fans he had began to look quite bored. When he realised who had walked through the door he stopped slouching, pulled himself up to his full height and actually stuck his shoulders back as if he were going to stand to attention.

Edwards paused to have a couple of words with the steward, which even though I leaned forward I couldn't quite catch. What I could hear however was that the steward called Martin Edwards "Mr Edwards" whilst "Mr Edwards" himself referred to the steward by his first name.

When football fanzines first started to get recognised by the mainstream media, several journalists commented that the importance of the fanzines was that they reflected the gloomier side of the fans' life. The shitty end of the stick that was never mentioned in the club programme. The reason club directors had the attitudes they had was that "everything looked rosy from the safety of the directors box". The reality though is not just that everything looks rosy from the directors box, but that everybody was telling the people in the directors box that things were rosy. Most of the employees and fans that they had ever met grovelled to them.

This is why I have reservations about the idea of supporters representatives on the boards of professional clubs. The danger is that "company men" or would be "company men" will simply take a seat on the board and then be used to sell unpopular ideas to fans. Certainly supporters representatives will not be feared by directors - 1 vote against 10 - who's going to be scared by that!

For Manchester United (unlike Glasgow Rangers!) The emphasis this season is on Europe. There are very much two sides to the history of Manchester United in Europe post Munich - the glory of European silverware in 1968 and 1991, and the underside. The sickening greed of both United and UEFA in attempting to ensure that every last

pig got its nose in the European trough.

United stopped organising trips to European games after rioting in September 1982 after Valencia knocked us out of the UEFA cup. This decision was irrelevant to many fans as they did not travel on club organised trips and had no real desire to do so. With United washing their hands of European travel, fans travelled independently for the next 2 seasons until Liverpool's fans (and the Heysel stadium) intervened and we were all banned from Europe.

One of the better written descriptions of the sort of foreign travel organised by major clubs in England can be found in "Steaming In - The Journal of a Football Fan" by Colin Ward. Where travelling with Arsenal to East Germany he encounters the mixture of incompetence and arrogance that can typify clubs approach towards their supporters.

When English clubs were re-admitted to Europe in 1990-91, United adopted a dual strategy. Official trips were organised, but fans were also free to travel on their own. Away matches in Hungary, Wales, France and Poland passed off without major dramas.

As soon as United won away in the first leg of the cup winners cup semi final, thousands of fans bought package holidays for the final. It was at this point that the club announced match tickets would only be sold to those on club sponsored trips. This when 25,000 people were planning to travel to Rotterdam, the vast majority independently of the club. This action was of course taken "for the good of the club" and dressed up in the sort of "this hurts me more than it hurt you" language - so beloved of the British public school boys. It was obviously nothing to do with the profits that could be made on 25,000 day returns to Rotterdam!

Unfortunately at this stage of my life I was yet to read Colin Ward's book so rather than argue the toss with the club (as many fans did) me and 2 mates reluctantly signed up for the club trip. For those that maybe tempted to think that the club only wanted people travelling who were members, and wanted them on official trips so as to avoid crowd trouble - consider this. The trips were officially members only. Yet the 2 guys I went with used friends membership cards - with totally different names to the names on their passports. The man in the ticket office never batted an eyelid. As long as the money was going to the club's coffers they could not care less.

Everyone knows that the easiest way to get to Rotterdam from Manchester is to travel on the Hull to Rotterdam ferry. However, Humberside and Greater Manchester Police forces pooled their joint intelligences and came out with a cunning long cut to preserve public order. Namely a 7 hour coach journey to Dover, followed by a 6 hour journey from Calais, through Belgium to Rotterdam. The

ozone layer must have been begging for mercy!

The only thing United got right about the whole journey was the coaches departure time. They were all scheduled to leave Old Trafford at midnight which meant a full nights boozing would be possible before we left. On paper at least the trip appeared well organised - the coaches left on time, and we were promised stopping off points in both France and Belgium to relieve the monotony.

Shortly into the journey however it became apparent that the coach steward was an archetypal football club steward, even though he lacked a fluorescent jacket he was clearly a company man down to his socks.

Everyone on the coach had purchased a package that included a joint coach and match ticket. However we had actually been given the coach ticket and were promised our match tickets when we bordered the coach. The coach was barely on the M6 before people started requesting their match tickets. The story was now changed - we would only be given our tickets when the coach cleared customs at Calais. Presumably they were terrified that if we were responsible for our own tickets we would lose them or try to stow away at Dover and make our own way to the match!

In fact it can be remarkable how similar the clubs attitude to the players and the fans actually is. There was an incident on a club tour in the 70's when the United captain, Matin Buchan was nearly fined for refusing to hand over his passport to the club secretary, Les Olive. Apparently all the players, when on tour, would surrender their passports to Olive for safe keeping. Buchan turned round and said that he was an adult and as such was perfectly capable of looking after his own passport. The club threatened to fine him for insubordination!

Anyway we got to France and were finally entrusted with the match tickets which we had all paid for weeks ago. Next problem - most people on the coach (myself included) had gone to considerable expense to change English money, not just into guilders to spend in Rotterdam, but also in currency to spend at the advertised stop offs in France and Belgium on the way.

Instead we were told that there was now "no time" to stop in France as "everybody" would want to get to Rotterdam as soon as possible. As one flat Belgium field followed another flat Belgium field it became obvious we would not be stopping in Belgium either.

As for the game itself United put in such a good performance on the field we all forgot how badly treated we had been off it. When I got back to England I swore that I would never travel to Europe by coach again, and that I would never travel to Europe with United's travel

club again. Judging by the numbers who now travel independently or on rival tours to United's I was not alone in my resolutions.

As illustrated elsewhere in this issue of Animal the squeeze is on to price the working class supporter out of the ground. To the directors such fans are far safer in front of the TV sets, where they cannot cause any trouble or be heard swearing by the sponsors.

At most premier league grounds now - from Barnsley to Manchester United - the vast majority of the grounds are packed with season ticket holders. If you are unable to find between £360 (Derby) and £170 (Leeds - is that only half the season?) In May or June you have little chance of success when it comes to getting a ticket. At Old Trafford those without season tickets compete for tickets in a ballot.

Given the above we have to be honest and say that with hindsight the victory against ID cards was the victory that never was. The then government suggested a voluntary membership scheme as neither fans nor clubs wanted a compulsory ID card scheme. It seems a traditional British fudge. But at how many of the bigger clubs is the scheme really voluntary?

Originally the clubs tried to sell this voluntary membership by pointing out members get priority for tickets. At Manchester United the capacity is 55,000 yet the number of members is at least twice that. Where's the priority? Membership at United costs £12 for adults, £6 for juniors. For that you get a badge and a yearbook, as well as the same right to apply for tickets that you had before the membership scheme came in. Not much for £12 is it?

I would estimate that after costs for administration United's membership scheme will have brought in about £1,750,000 per season. The membership scheme has basically become a share issue without there being any shares for sale. And all the football fanzines congratulated themselves for defeating ID cards!

Recent seasons have seen supporters at big clubs such as Celtic and Manchester City, and smaller clubs such as Brighton and Hull City oppose unpopular chairmen and boards. All too frequently however we are just swapping one boss for another - at City the unpopular millionaire TV salesman Swales was replaced by the popular millionaire toilet paper salesman Franny Lee. As big capitalism strengthens its grip at the big clubs Caspian owning Leeds, Manchester United developing links in the far East, the whole bloody lot of them dominated by SKY, the situation gets bleaker.

Is the best supporters can hope for to join together in independent supporters associations, build their arguments and then hit the money men hard when the opportunities

present themselves? Players and directors come and go, as do shareholders, but we are the only permanent thing about football. That is our Strength.

Paul Marsh. October 1994, and updated August 16th 1997. Paul is a season ticket holder at Old Trafford.



Review

Match of the Eighties

There are many reasons to dislike this programme, it's not so much that it's a cheap collection of *Match of the Day* and *Sportsnight* highlights edited together in a vain attempt to cover up for the fact that the BBC has lost out to BSkyB in the franchise for sport, or that Danny Baker's presentation is full of predictable comments said in his uniquely irritating manner. How do Millwall fans put up with him?

The most galling aspect of the programme is its historical revisionism, the way it looks at 80s teams through the lens of the late 1990s. Baker's script constantly evokes surprise at who was in the top six in the early-mid 80s, but it was not considered bizarre then to see Luton and Watford near the top in the early 80s. They were good teams, full of great players; a young John Barnes, Luther Blissett. The concentration on teams like Manchester United may pander to the interests of the 90s, but in the 80s they were just another, not especially successful (albeit well-supported) team.

True a dose of old fashioned nostalgia never goes amiss. The early episodes conjure up an era when there was no team strip sponsorship, goalkeepers didn't wear gloves, huge packed terraces and clubs had players born and/or brought up in the area playing for them. It also served as a reminder of the bad side; casual, brutal racism, irresponsible hooliganism, decaying grounds and psychotic police. Things in football have changed, not all for the better, but neither entirely for the worse.

Marks out of 10: 6 ½ (-2 more for smug Danny)
= 4 ½. KW

Cantona - The *Legend* Lives On

This is a bit of a rant. An appreciation of a genius who knew it, but never took on the boring official outlook that a lot of players take on in their later years when they are trying to become managers or TV pundits. That's not to say he won't become an arse, but at football at least he was a hero. This was put together from 2 peoples' views.

I could always spot a talent, someone who excels and makes extraordinary moves and plays. The unexpected and the brilliant, that can really win. This talent is rare in any field, but when it is spotted should be nurtured and encouraged to grow by example. Just one of the great plays was the ball 50 yards or so down the line to Giggs in the Porto game last season, with the outside of his foot, and of course United scored because of it. One great goal was the one against Wimbledon when he chested it down and hit it dipping over the keeper from about 25 yards.

A WELL READ RED

One of the most famous quotes in British Football History came at a Croydon hotel in 1995.

"When the seagulls follow the trawler. It is because they think sardines will be thrown into the sea".

Those who were baffled by Eric Cantona's quote at his post court press conference were clearly not fans of the French existentialist Albert Camus. In his essay "The Sea Close By" Camus wrote:

"Since our departure the seagulls have been following our ships, apparently without effort, almost without moving their wings. Their fine straight navigation scarcely leans upon the breeze. Suddenly, a loud plop at the level of the kitchens casts a greedy alarm among the birds, throws their fine flight into confusion and sends up

a fire of white wings. The seagulls whirl madly in every direction, and then without any loss of speed drop away from the fight one by one and dive down to the sea. A few seconds later they are together again on the water, a quarrelsome farmyard that we leave behind us, nestling in the hollow of the wave, and slowly plucking through the manna of scraps."

mind, and gets talked about. This is important, because who gives a fuck what you do or say if nobody knows about it? You may as well not exist.

Was Camus, who was a keen footballer himself, responsible for inspiring the immortal quote? Some how I think the chances of Eric actually telling us are pretty slim.

A Player So Great, He Could Even Persuade You to Talk to Coppers



Of course, Cantona was referring to the media and the pundits, and rivals who were keen to comment on what Cantona did. Lets make this plain, after being verbally attacked by a racist loudmouth for the zillionth time, he decided to attack the bastard in question. All this bloke got was a kick and a punch and its all over the media for days, and is still talked about today. Make no mistake, the loudmouth deserved a payback and he got it.

It's a trivial 'offence' in the order of things, and yet it's blown out of all proportion. What Cantona was saying is the media have got nothing better to do with their life than this sort of following people about in a parasitic type of way.

Cantona has sought media attention, or has he? Or does it follow around what he did in his career? This is an irrelevant question really, what important is that he exists in the public

The scene: Swindon Police Station, March 19th 1994. Having been arrested for defending myself from an extremely overweight Swindon Town supporter who had barged me with his beer gut before punching me in the face, I was waiting to be formally charged with Threatening Behaviour. Having kept up a virtually continuous policy of NO COMMENT during 3 hours of fingerprinting, photographing and questions about why I was not on the electoral register. I relented once, when I thanked a copper for a rather weak cup of tea he made me (a crime in itself).

Virtually out, I could overhear 3 cops talking about the game and Erics' sending off. Sniggering one of them shouted across "How come your star man got sent off?"

Provoked at this display of disrespect I leapt to Erics defence. "Moncur was stuck under his legs" I argued "Cantona did a little stamp on his body so as to stop him holding him back".

My surly silence was broken. Roars of porcine laughter broke out, followed by demands to know exactly what a little stamp was. Duly charged, I was politely given directions to the train station and stepped out into the Wiltshire air content that the Wiltshire

constabulary did not know greatness when it had been staring them in the face.

Cantona by Cantona The Way he Sees the World

(Quotes taken from "Cantona On Cantona", published by Manchester United books, 1996.)

"Motivation is the key to my success. I'm motivated by a challenge. It's the same in football as in life. What excites me is never to stay still, but constantly to do something new, to do something that interests me... I need new challenges all the time to fuel my passions. I don't want things to happen to me; I want to live every moment of my life to the full. I want to feel a buzz..."

I often get asked about the change in my temperament since the incident at Crystal Palace. The truth is there hasn't been such a big change... it's impossible for anyone to say definitively that something like that can never happen to them...

I'd hesitate to say that what happened was a mistake, or that it was foolish or silly. It was far *too complicated* to be characterised in such simplistic terms...

You have to give a hundred percent all the time. It's a matter of respecting the fans too. A matter of honouring all those millions of people who want football to be a game of beauty, a game of passion, a game of glory. In preparation and on the pitch, we give our all.

People are sometimes surprised that I give so much of my time to the fans. I'm amazed anyone should find it strange. As far as I'm concerned, it's like belonging to a big family. And if you're part of a family, you have to love each other and have time for each other.

I don't sign autographs out of a sense of obligation. I do it because I know that when fans ask me for an

autograph, it's a big deal for them - it might even be a special moment in their lives, a once in a lifetime experience. What you have to remember is that when someone comes to ask for an autograph, it's because they have a passion, and that passion means that if you accept, then that's fine, but if you refuse, it can hurt a great deal. It will leave an indelible impression on them, a disappointment that will mark them for life. At the same time, if ever they did manage to get an autograph, that too sticks in their memory. When someone asks you for an autograph, it's an important moment...

I maybe many things, but selfish isn't one of them.

The secret of football, and of team performance, is harmony. True harmony is equivalent to perfection, to beauty. Think of the movement of a champion gymnast, or the perfect synchrony of a whole symphony orchestra playing together. Harmony can be everywhere: in music, in the mind and the body, in a football team's will to succeed; and it's this perfect understanding, this combining of forces that makes winning possible. Harmony in a team means everybody playing together and thinking as one. In the end it's all about getting the ball in the back of the net, about having that perfect touch when you have possession. This can only come from the combined efforts of all the players....

There must be a kind of unity of purpose in a team. The mind of every layer must be focused on the same strategy. The more in tune the members of a team are, the greater its strength is and the better their game is to watch. There should always be a balance between attack and defence. That's the key to success....

The game in England is steeped in history. There's a rivalry between the clubs that stretches back for generations. The football stadia are always full. The game is alive with

passion and energy here.

People bleat on about English football lacking imagination. I agree that compared to, say, the Brazilians or some other Latin-American teams, or a few of their European counterparts, the English lack a certain individual inventiveness. But they more than make up for it in the imaginative way that teams play as one. In places like France or Italy, you might find players with more individual flair; in the English game as it's played today, the emphasis is not on the genius of one or two brilliant individuals, but on developing the creative gifts of the team as a whole. English football is directed towards the front, it pushes the team forward; the aim is for the whole team to score a goal. This is the reverse of the tactic used on the continent, where the aim is to put in place an ultra-defensive system in the hope that one or two players up front can make the difference.

Football should represent the most magnificent freedom for everybody.

I am very proud of participating in advertising campaigns that have a strong social message. The campaign I did for Nike *against racism* is one I feel especially pleased with...

In the final analysis, money's worth nothing. You realise it's not what's really important. There's more to life. There are things money can't buy - like love and nature...

Freedom is the greatest gift you can bestow on a child. But there have to be certain limits: I want them to respect certain values in life. Once I can rest assured that they have learned to love those close to them, to respect others and to respect themselves; once I know that they can gain the respect of others and the love they deserve, they can do what they like. I will gladly let them be whatever they want. I want their imaginations to open up to the whole world. I want them to be free as long as their freedom doesn't impinge on the liberty of others.....

I espouse the idea of anarchy. But it's never quite anarchy, there's always a little bit of order there. What I'm really after is an anarchy of thought, a liberation of the mind from all convention....

In my Utopia, at the very least those who cannot work would have a minimum standard of living: at the very least, enough to eat well and to have the right kind of living environment. It's when we fail to guarantee that, that we end up with the appalling social problems that we face today.

In a perfect society, people would be given the means to express themselves creatively. There would be centres where people could learn about music and the arts. Treat people decently and there would be a lot less violence and drug abuse. People would open their minds. Just because people don't work, that doesn't mean that you can't

make their lives better. If you do, you make everyone's life better. That's Utopia.

If, as some people think, there is such a thing as reincarnation, I'd love to come back. It would fascinate me to live in someone else's body, not necessarily someone famous. In fact, it needn't even be a human being. Given a choice, I'd come back as an eagle. I love the way eagles move; the way they soar, the way they gaze."

So, there you have brief edited highlights of Cantona's thoughts, and pretty good ones too. Talking about things in everyday language, which everybody can understand and also about issues that people talk about. My favourite Cantona quote, I don't know where from, is:

"I play with passion and fire. I have to accept that sometimes the fire does harm. But I cannot be what I am without these other sides to my character."

In every walk of life there are opposites and passions, it is how you learn to deal with them that is important.

What you might say, has this to do with working class politics. Plenty, in that the way people see the world is reflected in what they do and what they say. You get a lot of bores, who moan on about 'how bad everything is', 'nothing will ever change', and end up with their head up their arse. But with those people who crave and love excitement, who have a "joy de vie" [French for Joy of living], then the future is yet to be made. It will be made by people who have the determined spirit to carry on and build their vision. Certainly, Cantona had a lot of vision and knowledge as well as football talent. As Eric would say, the game isn't over and there's a lot of teamwork and playmaking to be done.

Au revoir

WHEN THE FANS HIT THE SHITS

A Brief Review of Football Protests

The quality of football in the English football league may be as high as ever, but the crises for ordinary fans has never been greater. They are being deliberately priced out of the game.

* At Newcastle and Barnsley only those who can stump up the price of season tickets can attend. While at Chelsea the cheapest tickets are the best part of £20. This is increasingly the case at Nationwide First Division grounds, where Charlton Nottingham Forest and Birmingham City all charge around £13 for the cheapest tickets - and this is filtering down to the lower divisions where mercenary chairmen of 3rd Divisions are charging £9 to stand on an uncovered terrace. The inflation of football ground prices bears no relation to that in the wider economy, - and especially wages. Bizarrely, it has almost reached the stage where some active fans don't want promotion for their team otherwise they will no longer be able to afford

to see them.

* The media is only interested in the major teams. The mainstream press, the News, and *Match of the Day* only covers the Premier League. Even now more people in England & Wales watch lower division and non-league football than watch Premiership games. Although the gap is lessening. (*The Observer* 10/8/97)

* The owners of clubs, the football association, major industrial and media conglomerates, BSkyB and cable television, have no interest in the smaller teams. These consequently face financial ruin (see Newport, Aldershot, Maidstone).

* The strict laws prohibiting fans from invading the pitch, even when the match is over, CCTV surveillance and the private annis of stewards, restrict the freedom of supporters to participate in their own team. At one or two premiership grounds (Man Utd amongst them) stewards

have threatened supporters with expulsion when they stood up with excitement.

* The owners of the bigger teams are considering pay TV as the main arena from which supporters should participate - as this (with hired supporters to add atmosphere to the televised game) would be more profitable and easy to control.

The owners and controllers of football want only one thing - more power, especially economic power, their biggest fear is that others, especially the supporters will threaten their control. The chairmen have tried to enforce their marketing plans on to the local, loyal supporters - threatening supporters with bankrupting the club if they do not comply - but fans have responded with admirable bravery and resourcefulness.

Hostility to those who run football clubs for their own interests is not a new phenomena. Attacks on the chairmans' and directors' Jaguars was much a feature of pre-Thatcher football, at terraces and Wagon Wheels. Yet, the past ten years has seen a considerable rise in football related agitation. Large numbers of clubs have had organised campaigns against the owners of the club: AFC Bournemouth, Birmingham City, Brighton & Hove Albion, Charlton Athletic, Hull City, Manchester City, Tottenham Hotspur and Sheffield Utd - to name just a few. As well as the general protests in the late 1980s against ID cards (successful) and the abolition of terraces in the top two divisions (unsuccessful).

Some complain that many of these protest; were reformist in character. This is because they sought either a moderate change in legislation or, in the case of the first football protest I can remember - Birmingham City's Blue Revolution of the late 1970s, and subsequently of Hull and Manchester City's campaigns - to have a different owner for the team. That is, to replace one arrogant plutocrat with another. Nevertheless, it is not something which should be dismissed out-of-hand - just as reforms in the industrial sector such as wage demands, or improvement in conditions by workers are supported. Anything which increases the power and say of the average (rank-and-file) football fan.

The campaigns, run by ordinary fans attempt to influence bodies who control a major part of their life. The Anti-Swales protests at Manchester City, may have had the intention of instituting Francis Lee as chairman (how they must regret that now), but fans were also promised a voice on the board - as represented by an editor of the team's fanzine - hardly mass democracy; but even this promise was quickly reneged upon.

It is well organised campaigns that will change things. Think of Charlton Athletic's 'Back to the Valley' and Brighton's recent Archer-Bellotti offensive which were

essential to save their clubs as their fans understood them. Charlton risked eternal exile, like their fellow south Londoners, Wimbledon when in 1985 the club went bust due to its board and in 1986 The Valley was ruled unsafe. Without money for repairs Charlton moved out, but the local Labour council did not want repairs done as they wanted to sell off the ground for luxury homes. This was prevented thanks entirely to the fans who used a whole gamut of methods to return to the New Valley. From leafletting, graffiti, mass marches (to build up and cohere support, petitions and then standing in local elections to pressure the council into facilitating a return.

The 80s and early 90s saw football fans from all corners involved in general campaigns against ID cards and all-seater stadium, as well as particular campaigns where clubs had proposed bond schemes (West Ham's being amongst the most prominent) and redevelopments. In the 90s, as things have become more desperate, with less successful professional teams in more danger of extinction, with the falling off of main income sources from selling the better players as a result of the Bosman ruling, has meant that a small team which is being badly run faces obliteration. Note AFC Bournemouth and Brighton & Hove Albion's recent tribulations.

Brighton were victims of asset stripping. A perfectly legal manoeuvre in which someone can buy an organisation, and realising that the individual parts are worth more than the collective entity, sell them off. So Bill Archer bought Brighton and sold off all the assets, including the ground, and was content to run the club out of existence. He was in the eyes of the FA, the perfect small club owner, a hard-nosed businessman who would make a profit, and it didn't matter if it destroyed a club in the process. It has never been clearer that the interests of the owners are antithetical to the interests of the fans.

The fans took Archer, and a partner David Belotti, on. Organising marches, pitch invasions, walk outs, and massive propaganda campaigns. Attacking his properties and his business interests. Developing a campaign where anyone could participate up to the level of their choosing and attempting to get solidarity with other fans, warning them of the consequences.

This multi-structured campaign, which is still ongoing, used diverse tactics for three reasons.

One, the enemy used more than one tactic, running black propaganda against his opponent, so to counter it the fans and fanzines had to use more than one tactic. By drawing up petitions, organising marches in London and demonstrations against Archer at his home, the fans built up solidarity and support. Attacking their business interests hits them where it really hurts and dissuades other potential football chairmen from following a similar path. By physically threatening Archer and Belotti, they put

them on them back foot for once and showed them where power really lies - with the fans.

This not to say that there were not a few bad features of the Brighton campaign, notwithstanding. First, a few dickheads at the Brighton versus Orient game ran on the pitch and tried to attack Orient players. Most of the Brighton fans deplored this action, but some tied to justify it. (*Orientear*, No. 105) Attacking players, especially during the game is utterly unacceptable, it's not as though O's players are the massively overpaid prima donnas of the Premiership. Such attacks restrict the groundwork for cross-club solidarity.

Second, while Brighton organised the excellent 'Fans United' day, their efforts at solidarity were undermined when some of their supporters were upset because Bournemouth's dire plight attracted some of the limelight away from them, (*Gull's Eye*, No. 97) It's all very well asking for solidarity, indeed Brighton fans were right to, but it has to be reciprocal.

Nevertheless, Brighton fans deserve much credit for fighting a vigorous campaign. All fans have to be involved in the prevention of the bourgeoisieation of the game. The power of the multinationals in controlling the sport, in particular BSkyB, has to be resisted (anti-Murdoch actions at televised games would be a start) Chairmen and boards of directors who place their interests above those of the fans (Which they all invariably do) must be fought with the most appropriate tactics available.

The problems facing clubs are likely to increase as share issues or floatations in the City become more frequent. Paradoxically these have been portrayed as a solution to fan dissatisfaction. There are many reasons why they are not a suitable solution for supporters. First, most share issues give those fans, either loyal/rich/idiotic enough to buy them next to no say as the majority block will be held by the Chairmen and his (or in Blackpool's case her) cronies in the Directors' Box. Second, shares options merely means those with most money have the most say. Thirdly, the fans mug enough to buy shares as an investment will have found that the stock market which elsewhere is booming at the moment, is crumbling in football. All but one of the clubs whose shares are listed on the stock exchange or USM had fallen below their original share price, leaving those who bought them, much worse off (especially if they were Millwall-investors). Finally, what right have the scum who currently control our clubs have to sell them? The clubs are ours.

As the fanzine Zulu (Birmingham City) put it:

I have never, and will never criticise the club.
David Sullivan, the Gold Brothers, (the owners)

Karen Brady (managing director) and Trevor Francis (team manager) are not the club. These are the just the people who at this time are in control of the club, and are not beyond being criticised... The fans are the club, the fans will still be here long after the present controllers are gone.
Colin West



Teams and their Celebrity Fan's

Every team has them, and they are growing in number every day. No newspaper profile is complete, nor a match programme published without at least a reference to the celebrity supporter. Once a season they'll do the Boxing Day match lottery draw at half-time, other than that the celebrity supporter uses their allegiance to the clubs an attempt to imbue their pathetic personalities with a little local colour or to give themselves a reputation as being a man- (or woman-) of-the-people. The celebrity fan, like the inflatable team mascot is just another humiliation that the average fan has to put up with. But which clubs have the most embarrassing? FRB gives his highly partial and biased opinion.

Current members of the board, or professional footballers are excluded. Embarrassment rating is out of 100 [in brackets].

Arsenal - Tom Watt, & Nick Hornby. Lofty the wooden board from Eastenders and Hornby the great yuppie of our game. Hugely embarrassing. Arsenal set the pace. [81]

Aston Villa - Nigel Kennedy. Very high embarrassing rating, a punk violinist? With a mock cockney accent. [88]

Barnsley - Dickie Bird (former test umpire), Michael Parkinson. Yesterdays men, but at least locals. [43]

Birmingham City - Jasper Carrot. Unfunny comedian. A quite common feature of the celebrity supporter. [67]

Brighton & Hove Albion - Attilla the Stockbroker, Des Lynham. B & HA have enough troubles, an unhumiliating [20]

Celtic - Dominic Diamond (who?) Tosser [83]

Charlton Atheltic - Michael Grade Wealty tosser [84]

Chelsea - Richard Attenbourough, Tony Banks, David Badeill, John Major, David Mellor. All wealthy tossers, a list which not only includes right wing politicians but the obligatory unfunny comedian [99]

Crystal Palace - Roger DeCoursey (&Nookie Bear) Unfunny comedian. Once famous, now a daytime TV stalwart. Possibly the reason why cable TV was invented [71]

Fulham - Hugh Grant, 'Diddie' David Hamilton. I guess Hughs' association proves that Fulham sucks [75]

Leyton Orient - Bob Mills, Julian Lloyd Webber. Another unfunny comedian and a brother of unpleasant rich plagiarist [71]

Liverpool - Jimmy Tarbuck. Unfunny right wing comedian, but that describes all scousers (calm down, only joking) [68]

Luton - Nick Owen If Eric Morcaambe was still alive, Luton would have had one of the lowest embarrassment rating, but instead they have a man whose famous for not liking Anne Diamond, as though that marks him out as unique. [66]

Manchester City - The Gallagher Brothers, Eddie Large, Bernard Manning. The Oasis boys demonstrate that the only way to make watching Man. City bearable now-a-days is with a nose full of cocaine. [73]

Manchester United - 'Sir' Geoffrey Boycott, Dani Behr etc. Every famous person who knows nowt about football but has jumped on the band wago n follows Man. Utd. Thinking this will impress people rather than marking them out as Home Counties wankers [96]

Middleborough - Bob Mortimer. Standard Unfunny comic [67]

Millwall - Danny Baker. Millwall, couldn't this be the reason why no one likes you? [81]

Queens Park rangers - Michael Nyman. Composed a classical music suite about Stan Bowles. Typical yupifier of the game. [70]

Reading - Uri Geller. Spoon bending charletan. One to make the most loyal 'Royals' supporters cheeks glow with shame. [78]

Rochdale - Liz Kershaw. Sister of bloke who made the line 'Here's another great sound from Bali' into a catchphrase. [50]

Sheffield United - Sean Bean. Unsuccessful film star appeared in one of the worst footy films ever made. [63]

Stoke City - Nick Hancock. Another smug, unfunny comedian. If only he'd done something to be smug about. [81]

Tottenham Hotspur - Chas 'n' Dave, Richard Littlejohn. Enough Said. [93]

West Bromwich Albion - Frank Skinner. A surprise here - a smug unfunny comic. [83]

West Ham United - Graham Gooch. Who'd of thought that a right wing establishment figure like Gooch would feel at home supporting the Hammers? [62]

Wigan Atheltic - Mikhail Gorbachev - This can't be true can it? [70]

So there you have it Chelsea and Manchester United have the most embarrassing celebrity supporters. These celebrities are not to be confused with real supporters. Anyone who hates Chelsea because of the famous people who have latched on to the club, have kind of missed the point. The celebs should be despised and attacked, not those fans who make up the vast majority.

The mass media concentrates on the famous personalities as it is an easy way to give a sports story wider appeal, and requires no imagination (imagination, like integrity and sobriety are not requirements for journalists). An article on West Brom has to mention the Black Country's only personality (Frank Skinner) just as a report about Chelsea has to mention at least one of their 'celebrity' supporters as though they were the ones that matter, rather than the broad mass of fans.

Just as a club is not its directors, managers and increasingly (with the mercenary nature of their agents) its players, it is not its celebrity supporters. Celebrity supporters, who rarely turn up, but for self-promotional purposes, and even then they hob-nob in the Chairmen's Box have

little to do with those fans who watch their team every week. The vast majority of celebrity supporters use their clubs for their own benefit. Which is why the abuse against them is to be so especially welcomed, especially when it is generated from the fans with whom these stars arrogantly claim kinship.

FRB

Nationalism and Football.

- Nationalism is a major dividing force for the working class, This article is submitted as a look at the way the state uses our need for recreation / leisure to further make us their slave. I don't know if it's a valid contribution to anarchism because I know very little about anarchism.

Nationalism and Football.

Niccolo Machiavelli in sixteenth century renaissance Italy wrote a short book entitled 'The Prince' in which he makes various statements and arguments by which he believed a state and its leader could manage his population and hold onto power. Machiavelli's approach was in its time quite 'revolutionary' and at least radical. His most endearing argument was the case made for a few short wars, spectacular and victorious that would give the population a feeling of superiority over the other city-states thus endearing them to their Prince. Three hundred years later the Machiavellian statesmen of capitalism around the world keep the teachings of Machiavelli close by. We are treated to the odd short spectacular war, like the Gulf in 1991, or the Falklands in 1982. Both of which sent the union jack soaring in the hearts of the majority of our class, offsetting grumbles and growing anger amongst us. In the early eighties growing unemployment and the beginning of the Conservatives government had brought rioters onto the streets, re-election for Thatcher looked unlikely until the opportunity to go bash the Argentine presented itself, and in 1991 the British capitalist state rocked and rolled by the Poll Tax rebellion turned to the war option in the middle east and the Conservative Party surfing the wave of national pride once again won the general election. The problem for the modern state is the cost of wars, they are an expensive way to encourage nationalism and the manufacture division amongst our class. A cheaper way is via international sporting clashes especially football, Football is the favourite team sport for the majority of workers, both as spectators and players, predominantly male but not completely

bereft of female interest. The importance of football to our class is used as a weapon against us in the class war. Every international match can be preceded in the media by jingoistic rantings of how great England is. A match with Scotland drags out the historically distant battle of Culloden to increase in the 'friendly' national rivalries over what is merely 22 men running around kicking a ball. Clashes with former continental enemies are worse, even after 50 years of peaceful relations with Germany, the chant of two world wars and one world cup is raised in this country as well as a great surge of anti-German sentiments, and racial slurs - remember the Daily Mirror during Euro 96. Which is incompatible with building a world wide revolution we can't have anarchy in the UK without anarchy in Germany and the rest of the world and whilst the English working class bares grudges towards the German working class etc. The remedy to this for most on the left is to turn against football as if it were the cause of the divisions, define football supporters as hooligans, thugs and Nazis. "You shouldn't go to the match comrade come and sell newspapers to middle class types with annoying pangs of guilt outside marks and fucking Spencer's!" Which of course distances them further from the class they supposedly see as the key to all their plans. The states manipulation of sports as a tactic in their statecraft should not be a reason to reject sports on the grounds that they steer people away from the 'real issues' of politics, current events and the economy, even though spending your lunch break talking about who will win the league next season probably doesn't give your boss as many nightmares as talk of a strike. An international football match can show a great deal more about what we have in common than the differences manufactured by the ruling class. The role of workers' propaganda must be to counter their propaganda at the stadium by emphasising our common experiences of greedy bosses who want us to work harder and faster, unemployment, police brutality and all the other crap we go through. Football has an international appeal and large working class audience, Communists, Anarchists, and Revolutionaries etc. Have a message that needs to be spread internationally and a small working class audience [in certain countries, in some its large] Could the stadiums of the world be the key to the workers of the world uniting ? Probably not but to combine watching the match with politics sounds like a good Saturday afternoon out to me.

Gary Salisbury July '97

COMBAT 18 & THE DUBLIN RIOT REVISITED

LARRY O'HARA

16 September 1997

Few events at football matches in recent years have been given the degree of media hype that the violence at the Lansdowne Road friendly between the Republic of Ireland and England was in February 1995. It is now almost fixed in stone in the popular sub-conscious that this riot was organised by Combat 18, an attribution that is in my opinion bogus, something that could and should have been evident at the time. In what follows I'll review evidence that the riot may or may not have been planned in advance, including the notion of how important timing was. Then I'll look at the various claims of fascist involvement put out by various sources--the state, politicians, Searchlight, various fascists.

PLANNING FOR MAYHEM?

According to one football source, leaflets urging attendance at the Dublin match for political purposes were given out at a Chelsea match a few weeks before by "20-30 BNP/C18" members [1]. Given he could not produce a copy of these alleged leaflets, and nor has anyone else, this seems highly doubtful -- a suspicion confirmed by the revelation this source was an Anti-Nazi League member: who know as little about nazism as they do about football. Another source arguing for the 'pre-planning' thesis was a self-proclaimed anonymous 'mole' inside C18 who spoke "exclusively" to Irish paper the *Sunday World* [2]. According to this joker, "small teams of 'army style tacticians' came to

Dublin before Christmas drew up detailed plans...[and] pored over Dublin street maps and plans of the ground. Nothing was left to chance". That he was a fraud, and most likely a member of the *Searchlight* gang trying to pull a cheap seam on the unsuspecting Irish press is strongly indicated by the only other source quoted in this article being Tony Robson, the *Searchlight* office tea-boy, who of course backed up this story [3], for which no trifling details like names and dates were forthcoming. Turning to the police version of the planning thesis, there are two distinct parts to this. Firstly, the wholly unexceptional and plausible claim that certain known football hooligans were in Dublin. After the event, to cover their back, the National Football Intelligence Unit (FIU) speedily leaked to the media extracts from a report sent to the *Gardai* on 7/2/95 giving precise details of known hooligan's travel arrangements [4]. What is absent from the report as printed however, is *any* specific information on fascist-oriented key players, as opposed to general claims about hooligan movements. While it may suit the bourgeois media and the state to blur the boundaries between football supporters and organised fascists, that isn't a trap we should fall into. According to the *Irish Times*, the FIU claimed to have told the Irish 50 BNP sympathisers were on the way, but police sources themselves were quick to dilute this claim in relation to C18. In the very same page of the *Irish Times*, another National Criminal Intelligence

Service spokesman (of which the FIU is a subordinate part) stated that "we are not able to comment on any individuals or groups but we know some are affiliated to extreme right wing groups" [5]. Sue Daniels of the NCIS stated shortly after that "for us political affiliation is a side issue", and the unusually perceptive journalist who spoke to her (Paul Goodman) ascertained that "while a scattering of BNP members were on the unit's blacklist, no member of Combat 18 was" [6]. In this case, the thesis of C18 involvement in pre-planning, and police fore-knowledge of such begins to look seriously frayed already. Nonetheless, a Detective Inspector with the FIU, Peter Chapman, stated over a month after the riot that there were "a small hard-core, no more than 50 at most, intent on using that game to prove a political point": without being able or willing to substantiate any of this with specific evidence [7]. What this points to is that the FIU, always something of a 'rogue' outfit in police terms, isn't necessarily in accord with the priorities of the NCIS as a whole, being far closer to *Searchlight* than Special Branch. According to *Searchlight*, both they "and the special police football hooligan intelligence unit had almost identical advance intelligence about the intentions of this nazi terror group" [8].

The second part of the pre-planning claim was very specific. This was the contention, advanced by the 'unholy trinity' of Special Branch the FIU and *Searchlight* that the timing of the riot had been contained in issue 21 of the C18 newsletter *Putsch* out in early February [9]. The relevant section said exactly this—"The British National Anthem will be played on the 15th, before the Ireland v England game say the FA". And that's it—no reference to attending the match (as alleged in one piece of fiction in the *Sunday Mirror* [10]) or indication as to a recommended course of action once there. According to one FIU detective (who wisely declined to be named) "It was agreed that they would make fascist salutes to ensure

enough of them had made it into the ground during the national anthem and they would try to provoke the Irish fans by chanting 'No Surrender' and then the violence would begin" [11]. This was echoed by *Searchlight*'s editorial for March 1995, unequivocally declaring that "*Putsch* issue number 21 contained the coded words directing its followers to kick off the riot" (p.2). This claim about the 'instructions' in *Putsch* is, to put it mildly, horse-shit. For a start, the National Anthems of both countries were played starting at 6.13 pm, and the game itself kicked off at 6.15 pm – with at this stage nothing more than anti IRA chanting being heard. It was not until 6.37 pm, when David Kelly scored for the Republic, that serious disorder broke out. In which case, if the anthems had been signals for disorder to break out, they had clearly been ignored. And if the supposed 'signals' were ignored by those supposed to respond, then there are only two explanations, not mutually exclusive -- either those meant to take their cue weren't in the stadium, or this supposed 'coded signal' was nothing of the sort. The most logical comment on this signal was provided (strange to say) by the very next issue of *Putsch*. The anonymous editor (probably Steve Sergeant) "noted with interest that it was in fact this publication that incited the riot! One thing that puzzles me, if this was so, how would anyone know? They'd only know this was the code if they'd already been told, so if they'd already been told, why use the code?" [13]. The hypothetical answer might be that members had been issued with some kind of 'code book' to interpret these instructions, but in this case, as the writer says, why directly mention the match? Indeed, if the intent was to kick off trouble after the National Anthems, then surely a coded message would contain no reference to the anthem at all? Cryptographic considerations aside, the most telling indication there was no 'instruction' to riot has to be the sequential pattern of events themselves, triggered by

events on the pitch not off it. With the collapse of the *Putsch* instruction as a serious piece of evidence, there is little more to fall back on, save the fantasies of the 'mole' mentioned above. This character "revealed" that the "big offensive was scheduled for AFTER the game ... at 9 pm in the city centre", but "minutes before the game the group decided to strike early... inside the ground rather than on the streets afterwards. The word was quickly and quietly sent around to the footsoldiers and the chanting of anti-Irish slogans and the Nazi salutes began". Aside from the point made above-there are no specific names or dates given, thus far this account is hard to utterly disprove. However on reflection it is subject to the same problems as the *Putsch* 'instruction' thesis--the question of timing. For admitting that Kelly's goal was the "fuse that ignited Combat 18's troops into full scale war" is to again remove any external objective evidence for 'pre-planning', in which case we are back at square one [14.]

C18 PRESENCE IN DUBLIN

THE KNOWN FACTS

Even if it is conceded that there was no pre-planning of the Dublin events by C18, at least on current available evidence, this certainly wouldn't rule out a significant fascist presence there. It is undeniable that C18 activists have attended previous England internationals and caused trouble at various clubs up and down the country domestically, most notably in their attacks on members of the Chelsea Independent Supporters Association on at least two occasions. Not that the presence of organised fascists in the shape of Cl 8 was needed for trouble to kick off: Colin Ward recounts how England's previous visit to Dublin in a European Championship qualifier also sparked violence, in which anti-IRA feelings played a part [15]. On that occasion though, violence took place primarily outside the stadium, but violence

there most certainly was, before C 18 even existed. When it came to Dublin 1995 however, the vast majority of articles merely asserted C18 presence, without thinking anything so mundane as proof had to be provided. That somebody photographed and charged waved the union jack flag around in a drunken manner is not 'proof' yet this was the usual standard adopted by the press. We have already seen how the police were unwilling to give any specific details of activists political affiliation that would stand up to scrutiny. One particularly amusing aspect of media coverage was the early allegations of National Front involvement. Thus the *Times* (17/2/95) illustrated an evidence-free tale of NF involvement with a (Flag) NF sticker tracing back to the old Worthing PO Box (230) not in use for 5 years. The *Daily Express* (18/2/95) spoke of 75 men shouting 'NF slogans' who were turned away from outside the stadium. This would amount to over half the total active Flag NF membership, most of whom could not be described by any stretch of the imagination as 'young'. The NF themselves were most aggrieved, and soon effectively disposed of accusations as to their involvements. The BNP were suggested as plausible candidates by those wanting to appear slightly more in the know, the great advantage of asserting BNP involvement is that this could then, using the BNP=C18 line, be presented as proof of C18 involvement by proxy. Dougie & Eddic Brimson, fiction-writers for the 'acid generation' printed a whole chapter of twaddle in one of their pot-boilers on 'Far Right' involvement in the Dublin events. This first-hand account, supposedly written by a BNP member from the North of England [17], contains grandiose claims of BNP involvement almost to the exclusion of C18. Thus this un-named person "could clearly see how the majority of the English fans were being manipulated by the number of BNP members present" [18] Ingeniously, this 'source' explains declining coverage of

BNP involvement by a "cover-up in the British press" [19]. Little credence can be attached to this account for a number of reasons. Firstly, if it wasn't actually written by the Brimsons themselves (my suspicion) its claims are not analysed in the slightest, but accepted as fact. Not good enough. Secondly, no proof in terms of names or even specific BNP branches, is given. Thirdly, the account of the articulation between C18 and the BNP is unreal -- not capturing either the occasional closeness and overlap (eg. Oldham/Nottingham) or very real hatred (eg attacks on Lecomber/Butler by C18). The BNP themselves predictably denied involvement, something they would no doubt have done whatever the circumstances: in this case, speaking of the BNP as an organisation, I tend to believe they were right . What is surprising given allegations of BNP/NF/C18 involvement is the relative lack of overt fascist propaganda found in/near the ground. The only pieces of fascist insignia (as opposed to a bewildering array of football crew calling cards) reported to my knowledge were a National Alliance sticker found on a lamp-post [21] and various NF stickers featured on Channel Four news two days afterwards. Why, exactly, would C18 operatives put up these rather than their own stickers, which were being produced in large numbers? What would be the point in making a political protest against the Northern Ireland peace process/IRA ceasefire and then giving the political 'credit' for it to other groups? It might be said fascists wouldn't want to carry propaganda for fear of getting 'pulled' by the police, but if the intent was political, then at least some leaflets/stickers would have been handy, but none have been disclosed.

Of those arrested, research suggests three have fascist connections, hardly a major haul. And only in the case of one (Jerry Lindley) is there definitive public proof of his affiliations--past membership of the now-defunct Nazi November 9th Society in

Milton Keynes. It is possible some involved, especially experienced hooligans, were able to evade arrest. In this regard it is interesting that a claim by Charlie Sergeant, former C18 boss, that he and others attacked a group of Irish supporters wearing Celtic shirts on the way to the ground seems to have been borne out by Celtic supporters themselves, in the fanzine *Tiochfaidh ar La!* [22]. The *Sunday Express* even printed a photograph of what appeared to be Sergeant inside the ground, something that has not been commented on by any other source. My information is that although he was in Dublin, he didn't enter the ground -- so this photo (which isn't definitely him by the looks of it) isn't what it seems. Given the large fee he was reputedly paid by Mark Porter for the interview, he would have a clear motive for exaggeration and even a degree of fabrication [23] Sergeant was there, that puts in the shade the admission by *Searchlight* editor Gable, when pressed by journalist Paul Goodman, that having studied film of the riot he was "unable definitely to identify a single member of the organisation" [24]. A month after the riot, a much-hyped *World in Action* TV documentary (27/3/95) covered earlier C18 involvement in soccer-related violence but failed to provide any proof of C18 involvement in Dublin other than a steward claiming he saw a C18-style flag produced and waved at key moments by a mysterious figure. Nobody thought to ask him exactly what symbols this flag had on it, thus this unsubstantiated statement is hardly significant -- other than if this was the best that could be produced over a month after the event, the overall evidence of C18 involvement is as weak as I have maintained it to be.

In terms of individuals, let us assume for the sake of argument that, say, Charlie Sergeant and thirty or so C18 personnel were inside the ground, most of them escaping arrest. Let us further assume that

if there they would have played a part in chanting pro-Loyalist songs and hurling seats down from the stand. Both things are eminently possible, even if the evidence for a major C18 presence is sketchy. The real question though is whether these things in themselves would constitute C18 orchestration of the not, as opposed to mere participation. I strongly contend that presence and participation is not the same as control and origination. It is certainly possible that C18 might have in theory

sought to orchestrate a riot -- but the only evidence advanced to show they did is threadbare, contradictory and bore no relation to what actually happened. The real story of C18 'involvement' in the Dublin riot therefore turns out to be not their actual role in the events themselves (minimal) but the exaggeration of this by diverse state agencies, including the security services and their media toads. More of that elsewhere.

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1. Steve Sexton on BBC2 Newsnight 16/2/95, a claim repeated in the *Guardian* by him 17/2/95
 2. *Sunday World* (Dublin edition) 19/2/95
 3. the scam would have involved *Searchlight* getting paid twice for the article--once as themselves, a second time as cash for this 'mole'.
 4. see *Daily Telegraph*, *Independent* & *Irish Times* for 17/2/95
 5. *Irish Times* 17/2/95
 6. *Sunday Telegraph* 19/2/95
 7. *World in Action* 27/3/95
 8. issue 237 March 1995 p.2 (which also has a dig at Special Branch).
 9. *Sunday Times* 19/2/95 (Special Branch sourced--journalists John Davison Adrian Levy & John Burns), *Irish Times* 17/2/95 puts the FIU view, and see *Searchlight* 237 March 1995 p.2
 10. issue for 19/2/95, by-line Dennis Rice. This novelist has been in trouble before for telling porkies about fascist infiltration into the Tory party a couple of years ago, but he clearly can't help himself....
 11. cited in the *Irish Times* 17/2/95
 12. if my memory serves me right, the move that led to the goal was made possible by Paul Ince losing the ball in n-*ddfield*. And even *Searchlight* couldn't accuse him of being in league with C18--or could they?
 13. *Putsch* issue 22 March 1995 p.8
 14. *Sunday World* 19/2/95
 15. Colin Ward'All Quiet on the Hooligan Front Mainstream (Edinburgh) 1996 p.97-102
 16. see *The Flag* issue 84 March 1995 p.2 The organisation producing this has now renamed itself the *National Democrats*
 17. if it were Peter Rushden that would be interesting...
 18. 'Everywhere We Go' Headline Books 1996 p.65
 19. *ibid* p.68
 20. *Spearhead* 313, March 1995 p.5
 21. the National Alliance is a US Nazi group with circa 15 members in the UK
 22. Sergeant's claim featured in the *Sunday Express* 19/2/95, the TAL report was in issue 12 May 1995 p.10
 23. the article reports as though it was fact Seregan's claims of 45 convictions for violence and seven jail sentences, including ones for gun-running to Sweden supposedly. The stuff of legend (and Holsten Pils).
 24. *Sunday Telegraph* 19/2/95

READERS LETTERS

Dear Animal,

Ian Bone's review of CW was fair enough, but there were a couple of points missing, I think. As I remember it from discussion with Tyneside CWers at the time, the business of turning into a 'proper' organisation was prompted by the feeling that all the new people being involved seemed to have no say in what went on. I thought at the time the decisions made were terrible ones, but still, there was that perceived problem people must have felt something had to be done about. Bit strange if it disappears from the memory/history, eh?

I also got the strong impression that those who became the 'leading' network had the hidden agenda all along (not necessarily conscious) of wanting changes which would let them be more influential - since they seemed to lose most of the arguments before that! If true, it's ironic, because there was all that stuff about Bone & Scargill having too much power etc, as if this was a terrible problem. Then all that happened was the 'theorists' taking over the position of influence (pretending not to, or sticking their heads in the sand and believing that they hadn't). CW was left worse off because the imagination and buzz seemed to evaporate.

I was glad to see the bit about "respect and consideration" in the editorial. That'll make a change from CW! You also say that you "don't want to instruct, teach or bamboozle people" (either with boring lefty stuff or any other stuff, presumably!). Fair comment, but you might want to instruct or teach yourselves, and you might want to communicate that to readers. And they might want to back. Doesn't it depend on how any particular learning is useful (rather than ruling it all out in advance)?

Good luck,

Tom Jennings, Newcastle upon Tyne

Dear all at Animal

I found the first copy of animal a refreshing and interesting read, please find enclosed an idea for a front cover and a short article about nationalism and football you might like to include in a future issue of Animal.

all the best,
Gary Salisbury.

OOH-AAH TONY BLAIR

In the same week that the Prime Minister appeared in soccer gear, following a game on his holiday in Tuscany, the Taliban government of Afghanistan pronounced on the deportment of sportsmen (shorts should start above the navel and terminate below the knee, and the only appropriate form of applause from spectators is a chant of 'God is Great'). A coincidence, of course. But both are manifestations of the extreme seriousness with which sport, particularly football, is taken in different cultures. Since the publication of Nick Hornby's book *Fever Pitch*, we in Britain have become accustomed to the idea that football is the equivalent of a religion for some people—notably those young men whose bloksh lifestyle is celebrated by magazines such as *Loaded* and *FHM*, the sales of which have now overtaken some strongly selling women's titles. This is confirmed by the monochrome billboards advertising the Carling Premiership, with slogans such as 'Football is our life'.

Demotic, puritanical, single-minded, self-obsessed—it would be mischievous to suggest that there is an obvious synergy with New Labour. Still, no one should be surprised that it is football with which Tony Blair, shrewd as ever, has chosen to identify himself, even in the height of the summer. John Major's devotion to cricket, now so altered from the gentlemanly game he seems to admire, emphasised what to many appeared the quaint side of his character. Football, by contrast, is on the up.

It is on the up because more people are going. Since the introduction of all-seater stadiums, gates have recovered from their nadir in the 1980s—although they are still only about half what they were in the years after the Second World War. It is also on the up because Islington Man and his affluent contemporaries have started the process of gentrifying the game. Just like an Islington town house, soccer originally belonged to prosperous, public-school types. The Old Etonians Football Club was an early winner of the FA Cup (in 1879). The first issue of COUNTRY LIFE, distributed in facsimile with the January 16 issue this year, contained an article

agonising over the 'struggle between amateurism and Professionalism'. Professionalism won, and the game lost most of its upper crust following. Even now, there are cricketers in the House of Lords (Colin Cowdrey has just been ennobled, in Mr Major's resignation honours), but no footballer. But plenty of high fliers are watching the game. In many boardrooms, the director who is uninterested in football has no small talk. Some of them may reflect that not everyone who appears to be grossly over-rewarded for their services is the object of opprobrium. Despite massive transfer fees, we hear nothing from New Labour about fat cats on the football field.

Equally, the Royal Opera House is often criticised for the level of its ticket prices, but those for football matches are nearly as steep. (Worse, the true costs of football, by sucking such a high proportion of broadcasting budgets into its coffers, impoverishes everyone, by depriving other television areas of the resources to make innovative programmes.) Perhaps it was an awareness of the parallel between opera and soccer—that there are as many prima donnas in one as the other—that caused the Prime Minister to make David Mellor, a celebrated opera lover, head of his Football Task Force. Like opera, football involves a high element of ritual display. It is also, in its players, pan-European. No wonder, then, that it has been excluded from the alarmingly Stalinist-sounding Sport Academy—the ethos of which is likely to resemble that of the advertisements run by the sports manufacturer Nike during last year's Olympics, which portrayed the athletic ideal as being to annihilate one's opponents.

Rather than the relentless pursuit of Olympic gold medals, a far more important national objective would be the rediscovery of *jou de vivre*, a quality that is rapidly vanishing from most forms of sporting activity. Our recommendation to the Football Task Force is to make the goal mouth bigger. Unlike rugby, which has virtually no experience of crowd trouble, football is a singularly low-scoring game. A few more goals might help relieve tension, banish zealotry and allow a little lightness of heart.

Is "Ooo-ahh Tony Blair" the opinion of Britains leading communists? NO! It's an article from one of the leading magazines of the bourgeoisie. The 21.8.97 edition of COUNTRY LIFE. Shoplift it or read it in the shops....